



Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: Thursday, May 30, 2024

Time: 7:00PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Please register in advance for this meeting

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsceigpzwsEtHyuYyiPCbHFRf-Vt30BqOm>

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review and approval of meeting minutes
3. Approval of Hill's Hill Mountain Biking Trails
4. Update: Mt. Gilboa Feasibility Project
5. Discussion: Next Chair
6. Discussion: New Potential Projects

Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: February 7, 2024

Time: 7:04pm – 8:30pm

Location: Conducted remotely due to Covid-19.

Draft Minutes

Remote Participation: Clarissa Rowe
Jo Anne Preston
Susan Doctrow
David Swanson
Leslie Mayer
JoAnn Robinson
Brian McBride
Alexander Franzosa

Also Attending Remotely: Christine
Bongiorno –
Deputy Town
Manager of
Operations

Deanna
Stacchi
-Minutes

Introductions

CPAC Chair, Clarissa Rowe, welcomed members and guests at 7:00pm. She noted that the budget was \$1.389M less than this years' requests. She also advised the Committee that state revenues were going down. There is \$2,468,035 funding to be awarded. Ms. Bongiorno advised attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

Review and Approval of Minutes – Ms. Mayer motioned to approve the minutes from October 12, 2023, January 24, 2024, and January 31, 2024, as amended, seconded by Ms. Doctrow and approved 8-0.

Discussion of FY25 CPA Preliminary Applications Received

Community Housing

Shea House, Special Needs Housing, Sunnyside, Leasing Differential and Homelessness Prevention

Ms. Preston – Jack Nagle informed her that a \$100K grant was awarded for the Special Needs Housing project.

Ms. Rowe – The Shea House Roof project has been designated as a Housing Project. Ms. Mayer questioned whether the project falls under social services, which would not meet CPA criteria. Ms. Preston stated that the project falls under affordable housing but noted that the majority of individuals in need of housing are also in need of social services. Ms. Rowe shared an experience with a homeless man in Boston who stated that he was moving back to Arlington because “the people are nice there”.

The Committee had discussed reducing the funding for Sunnyside to \$400K but will now consider using the \$100K grant acquired by Jack Nagle toward Special Needs housing which would allow the full \$500K to be awarded for Sunnyside.

Historic Preservation

Digitizing and Preserving Marriage Records

Ms. Mayer – If the marriage records project is for record retention only and will not allow public access to the documents then the project should be funded by town government, not CPA. She and Ms. Robinson noted that Ms. Brazile offered to provide a cost breakdown and suggested awarding half the funding request to get the project started and review the progress and results. Ms. Rowe reminded the Committee that voting must take place tonight to meet the Select Board and Town Meeting schedules. She also noted that Town Planning documents have already been digitized and that digitization is crucial to maintaining and safeguarding all again documents.

Ms. Doctrow – Stated that digitizing would prevent additional damage to original documents which are currently used to create certified copies by hand.

Mr. McBride – Inquired why digitization of town documents is not part of regular town expenses.

Ms. Robinson – Stated that many boxes of documents are stored unprotected in the Town Hall basement because the vault is not big enough to hold them all.

Ms. Mayer estimated that 96-97 volumes could be digitized with half the funding requested. The Committee decided to award half the request in the amount of \$77,597.

Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden

The ask was increased from \$42,600 to \$115,506. Ms. Rowe agreed with the increase, noting that the first estimate underestimated the increasing costs and did not include irrigation.

Mr. McBride – The garden attracts many visitors and the project will preserve open space. He also appreciates the number of volunteer hours going into the project and upkeep. Ms. Doctrow also showed support for the volunteer activity the project attracts.

Foot of the Rocks

Mr. McBride – Requested clarification of the two different amounts requested - \$450K or \$1.2M. He also pointed out the potential cost of the project may not be in proportion to the value it will have to the community.

Ms. Doctrow – Asked what would happen if the group was approved for \$450K and was unable to secure the remaining funds through fundraising.

Ms. Preston – Noted that the memorial is not being installed in the exact location of where the battle occurred. She also expressed concern that the anticipated completion date of April 19, 2025, was likely to be unachievable.

Ms. Rowe – The drawings are not done and cannot go out to bid until July. It is not realistic to expect that the project will be completed by the projected opening. She also pointed out that most people go to the Lexington Green on Patriot's Day, but the project will be good for Arlington long-term. The Committee discussed the differences in funding to Lexington and Concord compared to Arlington. Ms. Mayer noted that reduced funding may be due to changing from Menotomy to Arlington.

Ms. Rowe - Hopes that traffic improvements in the area, including Appleton Street, will help the area create an accessible and safe plaza. State and federal funding is not earmarked as far as she knows. However, she stated that the group has not begun the process of acquiring private funding/fundraising.

Ms. Robinson – Suggested installing signage in the interim to educate the public about the historical significance of the Foot of the Rocks.

Mr. Franzosa – While it's hard to predict the foot traffic and visits the memorial will generate, he supports the project and feels that it is important to grant some CPA funding to get the project started.

Open Space / Recreation

Public Land Management

Mr. McBride – Stated the project was good for the town from a holistic standpoint.

Ms. Doctrow – Asked if the current plan was expiring. Ms. Rowe stated that while it's not expiring, it extends and expands the existing plan.

Minuteman Bikeway

Ms. Rowe – Stated that the MBTA has already shut down prior projects and recommended that the group communicate with the agency first. Ms. Doctrow concurred stating that while the plan is great, working with the MBTA can be difficult.

Ms. Mayer – Said that portions of the project effects PRC property and David Morgan has come to meetings to discuss and request support. She stated that Ryder Street, being a public way, extends on both sides of the bike path. Ms. Mayer questioned how to decommission a public way noting that the design places the plaza on the road. Recommended funding \$50K to explore challenges. She also noted that the results of the parking lot study being conducted by Recreation Director Joe Connelly could impact the project.

Ms. Doctrow – Requested jurisdiction information and more information on the feasibility study.

Menotomy Rocks Playground and Picnic Area and Crosby Courts

Ms. Preston – Noted the big division between what the conceptual design presented and what the neighborhood expressed they needed. She recommended more consultation with the abutters. Ms. Rowe reminded the Committee that during his presentation Mr. Connelly had stated that the presented design sketch was conceptual for budgeting purposes only and was not the actual design plan. The Committee agreed to fund the design phase.

Ms. Mayer – Stated that the courts feasibility study looked at the entire town. Crosby was prioritized because existing conditions were determined to be the most hazardous and in need of repairs. She also noted that with the surge of pickleball popularity, court use was creating conflict between tennis and pickleball players vying for play time. She added that the loss of the AHS basketball courts had a huge impact on available court use, gathering and social space. Ms. Mayer mentioned that while the attendees of the meeting expressed their opposition, the PRC had received many letters of support as well. She recommended that the abutters attend the public meetings to share their input.

Mr. Swanson – Felt that Mr. Connelly was very supportive of public engagement and agrees that while there are concerns, more conversation is important.

The Committee's allocation of funding came in under budget by awarding the following amounts:

Special Needs Home Construction	\$200,000
Sunnyside	\$500,000
Homelessness Prevention	\$50,000
Leasing Differential	\$16,800
Shea House Roof	\$30,000

Marriage Records Digitization	\$77,597
Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden	\$115,506
Foot of the Rocks	\$450,000
McClennen Drainage Basin	\$40,000
Public Land Management Plan	\$25,000
Minuteman Bikeway	\$50,000
Crosby Courts	\$150,000
Menotomy Rocks Play and Picnic Area	\$400,000

The Committee held additional discussion:

Ms. Robinson suggested moving the Foot of the Rocks memorial to Schwamb Mill.

Mr. McBride – Recommended adding a condition of requesting that a determined amount be raised prior to requesting CPA funding. Ms. Rowe stated that this idea would require a conversation with Town Counsel.

Ms. Doctrow – Asked if Sunnyside construction could be on hold until funding is secured. Ms. Bongiorno noted that a CDBG application for \$250K has been submitted. Ms. Mayer added that construction can begin with existing funding if certain elements are reclassified as add/alts.

Bonding Discussion

Ms. Rowe – The idea of bonding began with the Mugar wetlands discussion and the Town Hall cupola reconstruction.

Ms. Doctrow – Bonding allows options for project groups to act on opportunities. She questioned whether the Finance Committees previous rejection of bonding would allow for CPA to bond projects. Ms. Rowe stated that CPA is allowed to bring bonding projects to Town Meeting.

Ms. Mayer - Noted that the idea of bonding was turned down “in general”. She stated that she is against bonding CPA projects. Ms. Preston added that she is also against bonding because it ties up funding based on unknowns for future years. She also stated that CPA already conducts “informal bonding” by recommending and awarding partial funding with additional funding to be awarded later contingent on the project group providing updates, expenses to date, etc.

Mr. Swanson – Agreed with Ms. Preston noting that bonding would need to be looked at on a project-to-project basis. He stated that he personally would support bonding for Mugar Wetlands and Town Hall, but not Foot of the Rocks.

Ms. Doctrow – Asked that the committee discuss the risk vs the benefits of the project and its long-term impacts. As an example, she stated that the Lexington Farm project would not have happened without bonding. Ms. Doctrow also noted that it would be beneficial to establish

criteria for bonding projects. Ms. Mayer and Mr. McBride expressed their agreement with Ms. Doctrow's statements.

Mr. Franzosa – Stated that while he supports the Foot of the Rocks project, he would not recommend bonding as it is not urgent as the needs at Town Hall.

Regarding a motion to recommend bonding for Foot of the Rocks, Ms. Rowe took a roll call vote:

Ms. Preston – No

Mr. Swanson – No

Ms. Doctrow – No

Ms. Mayer – No

Mr. Franzosa – No

Mr. McBride – No

Ms. Robinson – abstain

Ms. Rowe – abstain

Motion not approved, 6-0 with Ms. Robinson and Ms. Rowe abstaining from the vote.

Ms. Mayer made a motion to approve the funding for the projects as described for Community Housing, Historical Preservation and Recreation/Open Space. The motion was seconded by Mr. Swanson and approved 8-0.

Other Business - N/A

Ms. Rowe concluded the meeting at 8:30pm.

Hills Hill Mountain Biking Area Presentation of Conditions for Funding Release



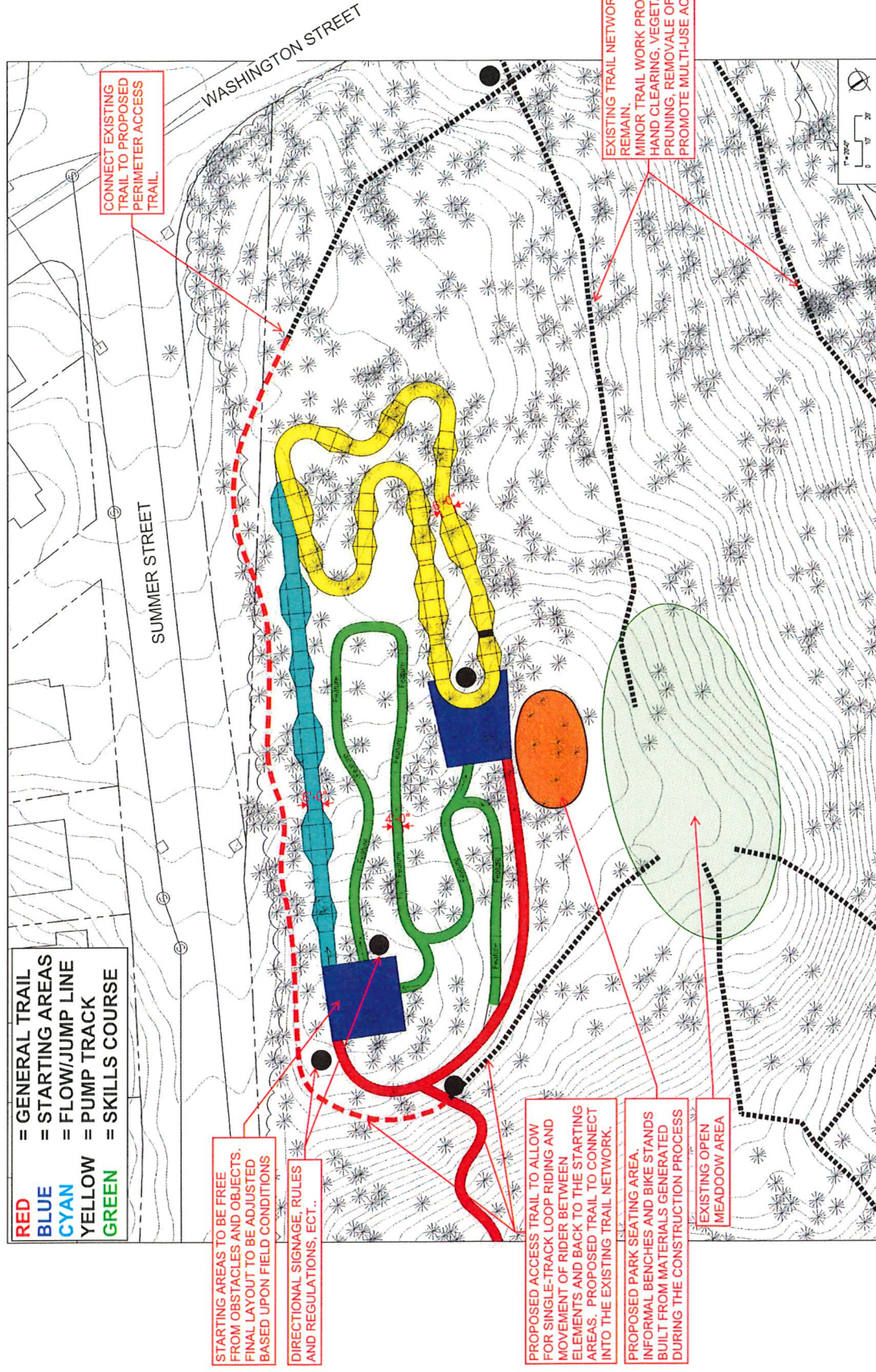


HILLS HILL BIKE PARK

PROPOSED LAYOUT - FULL SITE

ARLINGTON, MA

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HILLS HILL BIKE PARK

PROPOSED LAYOUT - FOCUSED

ARLINGTON, MA

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From 2023 report to Town Meeting:

Hill's Hill Mountain Biking Project

Town of Arlington Recreation Department

Recommended funding: **\$400,000**

The Hill's Hill property is located adjacent to the Ed Burns Arena at 422 Summer St, also abutting Washington Street, Summer Street, and the Minuteman Bikeway. The property was deeded to the Town of Arlington for a playground and recreation facility and is controlled by the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC). In 2020, a young Arlington resident presented the PRC with a proposal to build mountain biking trails and a skills area in the community. A working group subsequently examined various possible sites, and selected Hill's Hill as the most desirable location for various reasons, including its proximity to the Bikeway and the recreation center. Hill's Hill is a mostly wooded area of approximately 6 acres, of which approximately 0.65 acres is proposed for the mountain biking area. It is currently appreciated by residents as a walking site, including a place to observe wildlife; unfortunately, it has also long been known as a site for public drinking, with litter left behind, and loitering. In addition, like some other wooded properties, it has been used unofficially by local youth as a site for mountain biking and the opportunity to construct official, well-designed trails would be beneficial, including from a safety perspective.

The PRC funded a feasibility study that was presented in the CPA application. This study assessed the site and outlined several suggested components of the proposed mountain biking area, including riding trails through the woods and a pump track. *Importantly, these were only preliminary recommendations and no decisions regarding design have been made.* The proposed CPA funding will be used to develop the final design, through a process including substantial additional public input, followed by construction of the mountain biking area.

During its review of this project, the CPAC received an unusually high volume of feedback from the public, mostly Arlington residents, and this level of community engagement was most appreciated and guided the CPAC's decision. Many voiced support, including young people who enjoy mountain biking or wish to learn it and adults familiar with the sport. These included adult Arlington members of the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA), offering to contribute, as community volunteers, expertise in sustainable trail building and maintenance to the stewardship of a new mountain biking area. Many others voiced serious concerns, in particular a desire that this new recreational resource be created in a manner that will preserve the natural, wooded environment of Hill's Hill, including wildlife habitat. Taking into account the substantial and wide-ranging community feedback, the CPAC voted to recommend that this project be funded *only if the following requirements are met*: That

- (1) a member of the Open Space Committee be incorporated into the project's Working Group;
- (2) a tree inventory be completed during the design process; and
- (3) the chosen designer be directed to advance at least two concept alternatives for the location of the pump track.

If the preferred concept places the pump track in the woods, then the applicant will need to seek final authorization from the Community Preservation Act Committee prior to proceeding with construction; otherwise, no final authorization to proceed is necessary

Though substantial public input is expected to play a crucial role in the design process, these grant conditions, included in the contract, provide additional assurance that the wooded, natural environment of Hill's Hill will be preserved.

Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: February 22, 2023

Time: 6:05pm – 7:35pm

Location: Conducted remotely due to Covid-19.

Draft Minutes

Remote Participation: Clarissa Rowe
Jo Anne
Preston
Susan
Doctrow
David
Swanson
Leslie Mayer
Kin Lau
Alexander
Franzosa
Pamela Heidell

Also Attending Remotely: Julie Wayman
- Budget
Director

Jim Feeney
-Deputy Town
Manager

Deanna
Stacchi
-Minutes

Josh and
Henry
Fenollosa
Karin Turer
Steve Moore

Deputy Town Manager, Jim Feeney, welcomed members and guests at 6:05pm. Mr. Feeney explained that due to Covid-19 the meeting was conducted remotely and read through the Town's disclaimers about remote meetings and the Acknowledgement of Native Lands. Mr. Feeney noted that the meeting was being recorded.

Clarissa Rowe, CPAC Chair, shared the Committee's appreciation to the attendees for their interest and input through public comment, emails and letters. While this evening is primarily a committee meeting, there will be time allotted at the end of the evening for public comment.

Ms. Rowe explained that the projects would be listed individually so Committee members could request a "hold" for further discussion.

CPA Project Application Discussion and Voting -

Community Housing Projects

10 Sunnyside – \$750K, Ms. Heidell requested to hold.

Arlington affordable Housing Trust Fund - \$250K

Leasing Differential - \$30,634

Hauser Building Roof Replacement - \$250K

Menotomy Manor Window Replacement Project, Phase 2 – \$500K, Ms. Doctrow and Mr. Lau requested to hold.

Ms. Rowe - Stated that she received correspondence stating that the Arlington Affordable Housing Trust Fund has decided to give the Trust's entire CPA funding ask of \$250K to the Housing Corporation of Arlington to be used toward the 10 Sunnyside project.

Ms. Doctrow - Suggested reviewing Ms. Kelleher's wording to determine if the money would be considered a grant or a loan. Ms. Rowe noted that it was their decision and not within CPA's purview. Ms. Mayer expressed the need to ensure that the arrangement's conditions are reciprocal. The Arlington Affordable Trust Fund should have the right to recoup any funds not used for 10 Sunnyside and use the remaining funding for other projects. The Housing Corp should be awarded \$500K in CPA funding rather than \$750K.

Mr. Lau – Shared his concern about the unused CPA funds awarded to Arlington Housing Authority last year. He noted that CPA was forced to make difficult decisions last year and that the money could have gone to other projects. Ms. Rowe agreed, suggesting that CPA request a financial account of the awarded funds.

Ms. Doctrow – Noted that the Director of the Housing Authority had stated that the window project was their top priority, but the work hasn't been started. She recommended funding the Hauser Building Roof Replacement project with the condition that any remaining funds be used toward the window replacement project.

Ms. Preston – Explained that replacing the windows should not be done in increments. The plan is to place one order to replace the windows in all 179 units at once. The process is taking time as the Housing Authority is also looking to secure state funding.

Ms. Heidell – Would also like to see an audit of last year's financials noting that if the funds were not used, they should have been returned to CPA. She also recalled Mr. Nagle's request stressing the imminent need to replace the windows.

Mr. Feeney – Explained that AHA's initial request last year was \$1M. CPAC had approached AHA and requested that the funding be broken down over two years in the interest of the budget. The agreement stated that while the funding would be in phases, the project was not required to be completed in phases. Mr. Lau added that the CPA award was \$100K more than the final \$500K ask. Mr. Feeney stated that there is funding for the Hauser Roof Replacement project. Any supplemental funding would be used to repair the smaller, lower roofs.

Ms. Preston – Referenced the Winslow Tower Window Project which was not done in phases.

Ms. Doctrow – Recommended awarding \$400K for the Menotomy Manor Window Project this year bringing the two-year total back to the original ask of \$1M. She also suggested allocating the remaining funds toward the Hauser Roof Project

Ms. Mayer – Advised that CPA's role is not to guess the priorities of the applicants.

Mr. Lau – Motioned to reduce the funding for the Menotomy Manor Window Project to \$400K, pending review of financial accounting.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the funding for all Community Housing projects, save the Hauser Building Roof Replacement, with conditions discussed.

Ms. Doctrow – Yes

Mr. Lau – Yes

Ms. Preston – Yes

Ms. Mayer – Yes

Ms. Heidell – Yes

Mr. Franzosa – Yes

Mr. Swanson – Yes

Ms. Rowe – Yes

Open Space/Recreation Projects

Hill's Hill – \$400K, Ms. Rowe requested to hold.

Invasive Vegetation Removal – \$125K

Mill Brook Preservation – \$102,500

21 Pond Lane Feasibility Study – \$15,000

No Name Brook Preservation – \$20,000

Orchard Signage - \$2,500

Ms. Rowe – Stated that the Parks and Recreation Department had prioritized Hill's Hill, removing the \$315K request for Menotomy Rocks Park Picnic and Playground Project.

Ms. Doctrow – Suggested funding the design for Menotomy Rocks Park. Ms. Mayer stated that the playground was deemed unsafe and must be torn down first, which is not covered by CPA funding.

Ms. Mayer – Noted that while she feels the Orchard Signage request is a worthy project, scouting groups have always done projects using their own funding. She cautioned the Committee that approving the funding request was potentially setting a new precedent. Ms. Doctrow recommended adding a condition that the group conduct fundraising activities and, if funds are raised, give back the equivalent to CPA. Ms. Heidell shared that in her own experience with Eagle Scouts, fundraising is typically part of a project. Mr. Feeney explained that state grants often required a local match. He suggested using the same premise with the scouts; “matching” with fundraising, documenting volunteer hours, etc.

Ms. Heidell – Shared that she and Mr. Connelly had discussed the effects of funding the design phase only for Hill’s Hill. She stated that Mr. Connelly was concerned with project delays and increased expenses.

Ms. Doctrow – Recommends funding the whole project with conditions including inviting members of Open Space and ConCom to the working group, using dirt rather than asphalt for the Pump Track. She expressed her support for the project, noting that it will be a unique and special feature in Arlington.

Mr. Lau – Recommended using the money saved from the Menotomy Rocks Park project to fund Hill’s Hill in its entirety, with the discussed conditions. Mr. Swanson agreed, cautioning against adding conditions that are not in CPA’s purview. Ms. Rowe noted that PRC already works closely with ConCom and Open Space so the condition could be written in as a recommendation that CPAC is “urging”.

Ms. Mayer – Explained the cost implications of splitting the project into two phases. She also shared PRC’s dedication to the extensive public process. Input is being collected and incorporated into a very comprehensive design. She also stressed that the design is not done yet. Ms. Mayer also shared that a member of the Open Space Committee is already a part of the working group and that PRC works very closely with ConCom. PRC strongly believes that there can be a compromise that will balance the wishes of the youth and the biking community with environmental concerns.

Ms. Rowe – Recommended adding \$10K to the design fee.

Mr. Franzosa – Noted that Town Meeting still has to vote on the project. He advised Committee members to be prepared to defend CPAC’s decision.

Ms. Preston – Expressed concern about the level of conflict she feels the project is creating in the community. She recommends a phased project allowing for significant time for the community to get involved and provide more public input in the design phase.

Ms. Doctrow – Stated that she believes people are listening to each other and that it was wonderful to see so many people speaking on the project.

Ms. Mayer – Believes that there is a lack of understanding of the process. She stressed that all input is being taken into consideration.

Mr. Feeney – Suggested adding a condition that would require the designer to provide two concepts for CPA review if the Pump Track will be located in the woods.

Ms. Rowe – Stated that she also had a conversation with Mr. Connelly about conducting a tree inventory. Ms. Mayer said that PRC has conducted tree inventories for past projects, most recently as part of the Reservoir project.

Ms. Doctrow – Spoke with Mr. Connelly about adding trees as well. She questioned if added trees would be included in the inventory. Ms. Rowe explained that the inventory would include all the trees including any that are replaced and/or added.

Mr. Feeney – Reviewed the conditions discussed for Hill's Hill; Open Space Committee member to be included in the working group, conduct a tree inventory and require the designer to provide at least two concept designs, if the Pump Track will be located in the woods, for CPA authorization. Ms. Doctrow requested a second time that a condition be added prohibiting the use of asphalt in the woods.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the funding for all the Open Space/Recreation projects, Menotomy Rocks Park having been removed. Mr. Feeney reviewed the conditions agreed upon by the Committee prior to the vote. 1.) Include an Open Space Committee member as part of the working group. 2.) Conduct a tree inventory. 3.) Require the designer to provide at least two concepts to CPA for review and authorization if the Pump Track will be located in the woods. The Committee agreed that if the Pump Track was not located in the woods, this condition would not be necessary.

Ms. Doctrow – Yes

Mr. Lau – Yes

Ms. Preston – Yes

Ms. Mayer – Yes

Ms. Heidell – Yes

Mr. Franzosa – Yes

Mr. Swanson – Yes

Ms. Rowe – Yes

Ms. Rowe called for a 3 minute recess.

Historic Preservation Projects

Ms. Rowe noted that \$565K had been saved to this point. Ms. Heidell took the Hauser Roof into account, bringing the total saved to \$815K.

AFOD Building and Energy Upgrades and Repairs – reduced ask to \$187,750 by removing seat work.

Dallin Museum, Digitization and Rehousing of Papers – \$69,736

Foot of the Rocks Battlefield Memorial – \$112K

Jason Russell House Preservation – \$73K

Town Hall Envelope Preservation, Phase 1 – \$385K

Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden - \$89,996, Ms. Rowe requested to hold.

Ms. Heidell – Recommended lessening the funding to AFOD by \$30K, the anticipated MassSave Rebate amount. She suggested using the \$30K for the Hauser Building roof project.

Ms. Doctrow – Noted that AFOD is new to the CPA process and expressed her appreciation for their efforts in reducing the ask in the interest of the budget. She advised against reducing funding by \$30K.

Ms. Rowe – Stated that the Memorial Garden project is on hold until next year. Ms. Robinson has the funding for the plants but there is no funding or contract for the installation.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the funding for all the Historical Preservation projects, placing the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden on hold until next year.

Ms. Doctrow – Yes

Mr. Lau – Yes

Ms. Preston – Yes

Ms. Mayer – Yes

Ms. Heidell – Yes

Mr. Franzosa – Yes

Mr. Swanson – Yes

Ms. Rowe – Yes

New Business

Mr. Feeney – Reviewed the funding requests and approvals and determined that there is now a \$247K surplus.

Ms. Preston – Recommended funding the Hauser Building roof project. Mr. Feeney advised that the project has secured other funding so any CPA funds would be used for add/alts. Mr. Franzosa supported Ms. Preston's recommendation.

Mr. Lau made a motion to split the surplus equally between the Hauser Building and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, noting that the funds would help the trust continue to look for more opportunities for affordable housing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rowe.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Ms. Doctrow – Yes
Mr. Lau – Yes
Ms. Preston – Yes
Ms. Mayer – Yes
Ms. Heidell – Yes
Mr. Franzosa – Yes
Mr. Swanson – Yes
Ms. Rowe – Yes

Public Comments

Steve Moore – Believes that part of the issue with the Hill's Hill discussion is that people don't feel like they are being heard. He would like to see some sort of process to recognize and document public input.

Karin Turer – Expressed her thanks, on behalf of herself and her 11 year old son, for moving forward with Hill's Hill. She is excited about the new asset for the youth in Arlington and feels that the restrictions are reasonable.

Josh Fenellosa and Henry Fenollosa – Henry shared that he had come up with the project when he was in the 8th grade and was excited to see it becoming a reality now that he is a high school junior. He expressed his enthusiasm in being part of the public process. They thanked the Committee for their support.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of February 1, 2023 and February 8, 2023 were approved, as amended, by roll call vote.

Ms. Doctrow – Yes
Ms. Preston – Yes
Ms. Mayer – Yes
Ms. Heidell – Yes
Mr. Lau – Yes
Mr. Franzosa – Yes
Mr. Swanson – Yes
Ms. Rowe - Yes

Ms. Rowe concluded the meeting at 7:35pm.


Concern about Real Estate Marketing Discussions in Mt. Gilboa Feasibility Study

Sue Doctrow <srdoctrow@gmail.com>

Wed 4/24/2024 11:36 AM

To: ConComm <ConComm@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Clarissa Rowe <clarissa.rowe@comcast.net>; Elisabeth Carr-Jones <elisabeth@carr-jones.com>; Wendy Richter <richter@aol.com>; David F. Swanson <dswanson922@gmail.com>; Mayer Leslie <lesliemayer58@gmail.com>; McBride Brian <brianmcb@outlook.com>; David E. White <dwhite@gilbertwhite.com>; Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>; David Morgan <dmorgan@town.arlington.ma.us>

 1 attachments (24 KB)

Ltr-2016 Warrant Article 30.pdf;

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Dear Conservation Commissioners,

After attending the April 18, 2024 Conservation Commission meeting, I am writing with great concern about potential sale of the Lester Hayden house/garage and, with it, some of the land, on top of Mt. Gilboa. As you know, an update memo (April 5 by Martha Lyon and Daphne Politis) described, under "stakeholder engagement", an on-site meeting to discuss "how the house could be marketed and sold" with a real estate professional, Nellie Aikenhead. In her presentation, I believe that Martha Lyon indicated that her discussion with Ms. Aikenhead was more extensive than she had time to describe.

My husband John and I have been residents of Westminster Ave since 2003, "near-abutters" of Mt. Gilboa (via our next-door neighbor and the Park Place house behind us). I was involved in 2021 discussions, mainly on our Mt. Gilboa Neighborhood email list, that led to the successful CPA application to fund the feasibility study that is now underway. Among the participants in parts of that email thread were then-Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine and current Town Manager Jim Feeney (as, at the time, Deputy Town Manager), as well as Commissioner David White, who is also a Town Meeting Member in our precinct; Susan Chapnick (then Chair of the Commission) and Emily Sullivan (then Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent) participated, too, especially to update us on the FY2023 CPA application. The primary focus of that discussion, and the intended feasibility study, was to explore potential uses for the house and garage and/or their removal to use the site at the top of the hill for a conservation-compatible purpose (e.g a scenic overlook).

Shortly after that discussion occurred, I joined CPA Committee (CPAC) and, when we reviewed this grant application, I was glad to be able to describe its origins and my understanding of its purpose to my CPAC colleagues. Please note, however, that I am writing not on behalf of the CPAC but instead as a resident and Town Meeting Member representing my precinct, Pct 21. Still, I think the content and spirit of the CPA application, as well as the conservation/open space mission of the CPA, are highly relevant, so this context is important. I have spoken to a few fellow CPAC members about my concerns and I believe they agreed with me about this:

Nowhere in the CPA application (nor in any discussion preceding it that I can recall) was it ever anticipated that sale of the Lester Hayden house to a private (or any other) party was going to be on the table. While I appreciate that it can often be useful for a consultant to provide a variety of potential options, I assume that time/resources wouldn't have been wasted on investigating options that would never be considered. This is why learning that these marketing discussions were being held is alarming — it indicates that selling the house might, indeed, be under consideration. I really hope that it isn't. As the Mt. Gilboa CPA application itself quoted: "...structure(s) where present, are clearly accessory to the principal open space and recreational function of the property." As the application

also states, "Recognizing the unique nature of Mt. Gilboa, the Town is committed to preserving the conservation aspect of the site but is open to new possibilities for use of the building." I believe that selling off any piece of the land occupied by these structures, i.e. the house and garage, would be in clear conflict with these statements.

Like many others, but particularly residents who live within walking distance, I frequent Mt. Gilboa to walk my dog, to take a meandering route through the wooded refuge on my way to some errand, or to just wander around "getting lost", enjoying the views from either the hilltop house lot or the rocky overlook next to Westminster Ave. I am among the survey respondents who treasure the "wilderness" feel of the relatively untouched wooded trails and rocky features. I feel that the hilltop is a crucial contributor to the character of the Mt. Gilboa conservation land. Giving up any part of that hilltop to another party would be, I believe, a terrible choice for the town, no matter how much money could be gained by selling the house.

A similar idea was proposed in 2016, in a 10-voter Town Meeting Warrant Article (Article 30) to transfer the house/lot on Mt. Gilboa to the Arlington Housing Authority for use as affordable housing. While many of us in the Mt. Gilboa neighborhood have welcomed three beautiful affordable housing developments in our immediate neighborhood (Downing Square and 20 Westminster in Arlington, and FarmView in Lexington), we spoke out against Article 30, feeling that giving up any conservation land on that majestic, unique site would not be worth the few units of affordable housing it would yield. Fortunately, Article 30 gained little support. The Conservation Commission unanimously opposed the Article (see attached letter), noting that such a land transfer would be "very detrimental" to the Commission's purpose of protecting the conservation land of Mt. Gilboa. The Select Board recommended no action, with Select Board Chair Kevin Greeley stating at the hearing that he would "lay down in front of a bulldozer" to protect Mt. Gilboa!

Other than this recent, concerning update memo item, I have had no reason to believe that the Town's commitment to protecting and preserving its open space has wavered since Mr. Greeley offered to lay down in front of that bulldozer. I trust the Conservation Commission's stewardship and have appreciated its priorities on numerous issues. I was relieved and encouraged that Commissioners David White and Brian McBride (the latter also on CPAC) both spoke at the April 18 meeting in favor of retaining all the land on the top of the hill (most likely, with removal of the house) as a scenic overlook. I am writing to respectfully ask the other Commissioners to also, please, reject any proposal to sell the house/garage, on a lot of any size.

Sincerely,

Sue Doctrow

99 Westminster Avenue

TMM, Pct 21

Cc Co-chairs Arlington Open Space Committee (Elisabeth Carr-Jones and Wendy Richter), CPAC Chair (Clarissa Rowe) and CPAC co-Vice-chair (Dave Swanson); Leslie Mayer (CPAC and Mt. Gilboa neighborhood resident); Christine Bongiorno (Deputy Town Manager, CPAC); David Morgan (Conservation Agent)



May 2nd, 2024

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Act Committee,

I'm writing to ask that you strongly support and approve the plan as submitted by Parks & Recreation to build the Bike Skills Park at Hills Hill. This plan was developed with substantial community input and I believe works to address input from all perspectives on this project.

This project is going to be a fantastic new recreation asset for the Town and it's kids (and adults!). It will be low-impact on Town resources but very high value in a small space within the property. And that's important: this impacts only about 10% of the forested portion of Hills Hill.

What is very clear is that all of Arlington's open spaces are highly valued by it's residents and we all have to share in their use, enjoyment, and stewardship. There are many forms of passive recreation that we all take part in: walking, running, mountain biking, nature study, etc. All are valid. All can co-exist successfully in our town. Arlington's recreational trails should be shared by all and the Town should continue it's light-handed management of the trails by maintaining them as shared-use for all users.

As you may expect, the local mountain bike community is very excited to see this project happen. While the project will be produced by a professional contractor I can't emphasize enough how eager the local MTB community is to help ensure that ongoing stewardship of the bike park is kept at a high level by our volunteer trail care work. The Greater Boston Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (GBNEMBA) in particular will be happy to contribute our expertise, time, and equipment to this end.

I want to thank you for your initial support of the Hills Hill Bike Park by approving funding for it last year - I am hopeful that with your support for the proposal in front of you now you will help us make this project a reality for Arlington's kids!

Respectfully,

Adam Glick
42 Robbins Road
President, NEMBA



March 29, 2024

Dear Mr. Connelly and Park and Recreation Commissioners,

Thank you for organizing the Public Input Meeting this week. The presentation was very helpful as was the public discussion.

Save Hill's Hill supports a balanced compromise for this project. This framework would allow construction of a pump track in the "low-value" tree area along Summer Street, along with two access trails, as shown in the meeting presentation, in return for preservation in the rest of the property.

It's important that details of the preservation measures for **habitat, safe access and quality of life** are clearly incorporated in planning documents - and there must be a commitment to permanence for these protections. To us this means three critical points:

- **Preservation** of the habitat: the "as is" area has no new trails or enhancements; recent rogue trails are blocked off; native trees get particular care in the pump track area.
- **Preservation** of safe access: a walker-only trail is made at the current center/meadow trail, with fencing along the pump track border and appropriate signage.
- **Preservation** of quality of life for neighbors: noise, parking, and hours restrictions are implemented per neighbor requests.

We look forward to seeing this balance of construction and preservation in the coming proposals to PRC and CPAC.

Thank you for your collaboration to deliver a "middle path," which makes this project work for all parties.

Save Hills Hill Members and Supporters



Alan Jones
Anju Joglekar
Ann LeRoyer
Arthur Budnik
Asia Kepka
Beth Melofchik
Brian McBride
Brittany Gravely
Carl Wagner
Cheryl Marceau
Diana Zlatanovski
Diane Krause
Diane McKenzie
Elaine Crowder
Elisabeth Carr-Jones
Ellen S Cohen
Erik Pohl
Evelyn Ginsparg
Gareth Lerwill
Gretchen Landwehr
Howard Sard
Janet O'Riordan
Janice Brodman
Jennifer Hruska
Jessica Schlenker
Joanne Cullinane
Laura Bagnall
Laura Kiesel
Lina Haddad
Lolly Bennett (Alice)

Lucy Conroy
Lygia Grigoris
Maida Kaderian
Marina Popova
Mary Ellen Aronow
Mary Fusoni
MaryAnna Foskett
Naomi Bailis
Pablo Hruska-cleary
Peter Southwick
Rajen Ramchandani
Rebecca Peterson
Robin L Bergman
Russell Keim
Salvatore Savo
Sam Polk
Sarah Jackson
Sarah Trilling
Shawn Deshane
Shovon Ashraf
Steven Marrone
sue sheffler
Susan Stamps
Topher Heigham
Wynelle Evans

Fwd: Feedback on Hills Hill design

Christine Bulawa <christine.bulawa@gmail.com>

Thu 3/28/2024 5:47 PM

To: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Christine Bongiorno:

I am forwarding to you feedback that I sent to PRC regarding the design for the Hills Hill Mountain Biking Trial. I encourage the CPAC to rigorously enforce the funding conditions.

Thank you,

Christine Bulawa
Grandview Road

Begin forwarded message:

From: Christine Bulawa <christine.bulawa@gmail.com>

Subject: Feedback on Hills Hill design

Date: March 28, 2024 at 5:39:35 PM EDT

To: jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us

Dear Mr. Connelly:

Thanks to you for the online session to review the mountain biking trial design and to the design team for the work that they have done to incorporate the needs of divergent users. The formal presentation was informative, but only presented the preferred concept. In response to questions, the two alternative concepts, which place the jump track outside of the woods, were described, but without the aid of drawings and/or slides. A head to head comparison of the three concepts including the details supporting the choice of the preferred concept would have been of interest to many attendees and is needed to assess whether the pump track could be located outside of the woods. March 26 was a missed opportunity to address a critical question.

I support education and recreation for Arlington's residents--kids, adults, retirees. I support creating in Arlington some type of track/facility for building mountain biking skills. I also support the protection of Arlington's open space, especially the town's few remaining wooded parcels. Building a jump track requires a flat site; it does not require a wooded site. Because the construction and the use of the jump track and biking trails will damage the habitat and negatively impact the recreational activity of many Arlington residents, I do not support the design presented on March 26. I get that it's fun to ride a bike in the woods; unfortunately, Arlington no longer has enough wooded property to support all desired activities, and those that most damage the environment should not be a priority.

Sincerely,

Checklist Item	Answer
Is the pump track in the right place?	The alternate concepts need to be fully presented. The location in the preferred design meets some of the requirements of various stakeholders: bikers (flat, wooded), hikers (meadow intact), abutters (near Summer St).
Are the trails in the right place?	The trails and jump track are consolidated.
How much natural habitat is protected?	The footprint of the biking park is small. Nonetheless, constructing it will be damaging to the woods and there are no provisions to protect the surrounding habitat.
Is the nature zone significant, contiguous, and quiet?	The nature zone is significant and contiguous; location near the street mitigates impact of noise. However, the noise and activity will undoubtedly have an impact on the wildlife and on the experience of walkers, birders, etc.
Was the tree survey used to locate key features?	Yes, and the intent is to engage an arborist during construction to remove invasives when possible. Inclusion of the Arlington Tree Warden seems not to be in the current plan but should be.
Is unauthorized trail building prevented?	No, not as part of the project. Several unauthorized activities, trail building, night riding, and off-leash dog walking, were raised in the Q&A. Now seems like a good time to address these important issues.
Are walkers safe?	Not addressed as part of the project. Designation of some trails as walking only would seem a straightforward action as the default multiuse trail policy is clearly inadequate for this situation.
Is parking addressed?	The plan suggests that the location near Summer St and the bike path addresses this.
Are neighbors protected from noise?	The location near Summer St addresses this in part; however, abutters expressed concern in the Q&A.
Is night riding prevented?	Hours are not indicated in the plan but presumably could be added. Night riding does occur currently on unauthorized trails.
Is the park built for maintenance?	I'm not sure what is meant by "built for maintenance". Maintenance is not covered in the

	project. I believe it will be the responsibility of Parks and Recreation and be supported by volunteers.
Does the design meet the Three CPA conditions*	See above

Hill's Hill design meeting on 3/26/24

Diane Krause <samburu@comcast.net>

Mon 4/1/2024 10:52 PM

To: Joe Connelly <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>; clarissa.rowe@comcast.net <clarissa.rowe@comcast.net>; Kin Lau <klau@town.arlington.ma.us>; blmayer@msn.com <blmayer@msn.com>; abobzosa@gmail.com <abobzosa@gmail.com>; srdoctrow@gmail.com <srdoctrow@gmail.com>; robinsj@rcn.com <robinsj@rcn.com>; ja-preston@comcast.net <ja-preston@comcast.net>; Brian McBride <brianmcb@outlook.com>; dswanson922@gmail.com <dswanson922@gmail.com>

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Dear Joe Connelly and Parks & Rec Commissioners:

Thank you Joe for the 3/26 presentation of the design for the pump track in the woods near Summer St., where you clearly and thoughtfully laid out your reasoning for the location. However, you neglected to present your plan on how you will protect Hill's Hill's habitat outside of the pump track area, which is a concern to many Arlington residents and was the reason behind CPAC's requirements for funding.

The tree survey proved there's an abundance and variety of native trees in the interior of the park. I've spent hours in Hills Hill over the past few years working with friends to remove black swallow wort plants. It's extremely satisfying to help protect this tiny park.

Hill's Hill is for everyone, not just young mountain bikers. And it needs to be preserved and protected for everyone to enjoy, however they choose to be in nature.

I hope to hear your plans for:

Safety It's true bikers are allowed on trails in Arlington parks along with walkers, but in no other park will there be such a concentration of bikers in such a small area. We don't have the luxury here of a large park where bikers can be separate from walkers and for there to be trails long enough for mountain biking adults to enjoy.

The most popular trail for walking is the central path through the meadow from Washington St. to the ball fields. People walking here will be intersecting with bikers moving between the pump track area and the bike path.

Solutions? Close the central trail to bikers?

Habitat Preservation In the feasibility study conducted by Powderhorn they warned of potential issues for the pump track & trails:

Volatile weather patterns, i.e., heavy rain and related erosion

Potential high volume leading to heavy wear

We're already seeing erosion from riders and heavy rains. We're already seeing high volumes of unauthorized trails, with more being built over the past few months.

What is the plan for a large group of riders at the pump track location? How do you keep them from overrunning the area?

How will erosion and heavy use and unauthorized trails be addressed? Will volunteers really be in charge of maintenance? (This seems to be discouraged in other Arlington parks.) Will there be periodic reviews of conditions in the park?

Joe, in the meeting you stated that there's no way to stop people from making illegal trails. That is probably true of one or two trails in a park, but at Hill's Hill we have multiple unauthorized trails with jumps being made by bikers. The kids and/or adults who are doing this are giving the impression that they can do anything they want at Hill's Hill. I hope that's not true.

What enforcement mechanisms will you put in place? Will you block the unauthorized trails? Shut down access to the pump track as one of your contractors suggested? (I hope that isn't necessary.) The large number of Arlington residents who care about the habitat really need to hear your plans on these issues.

If the PRC answer is that there's nothing we can do to stop the unauthorized trails, then I can't support your plan. I hope a solution can be found—there's been progress and compromise. The pump track design looks amazing. Let's not sacrifice the rest of Hill's Hill by not having a plan in place for the entire habitat that respects the needs of walkers and neighbors as well as young mountain bike riders.

Thank you,

Diane Krause
High Haith Rd.

The soccer field is part of the Hill's Hill property, so more than 50% is already being used for active recreation

Hill's Hill comment

Brittany Gravely <biosphere@public-information.org>

Tue 4/2/2024 4:25 PM

To: Joe Connelly <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Mr. Connelly and Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the proposed compromise between the original development for Hill's Hill and total preservation: a project with a modest sized pump track built in a wooded area tagged "lower value" by the tree survey. This area borders Summer Street, is away from most neighbors and lies on the edge of the woods.

In return, it is essential that the current woods and meadow in the remainder of the lot are completely conserved. The project plan should add specific preservation measures called out by residents: a walker-only path through the center/meadow; closing and preventing rogue trails; and addressing neighbor concerns about noise and parking.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Brittany Gravely
Boston, MA

Hill's Hill Compromise Plan

Sam Polk <Sam.polk@outlook.com>

Tue 4/2/2024 6:04 PM

To: Joe Connelly <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

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Dear Mr. Connelly and members of the Community Preservation Act Commission,

I am writing to express support for the compromise plan on the Hill's Hill pump track outlined by the "Save Hill's Hill" group. We believe that a compromise balancing recreational development and environmental preservation is crucial for the sustainable enjoyment of Hill's Hill Woods, and for aligning Arlington's developmental practices with its environmental commitments.

The compromise proposes a modest-sized pump track in a lower-value wooded area containing invasive trees that is far from residents (mitigating parking/noise issues). This plan will enable Arlington residents will be able to enjoy a pump track in the woods (as desired). It will also minimize the environmental impact of a pump track and preserve Hill's Hill's natural beauty for wildlife, walkers, and neighboring residents.

As a part of this compromise, we ask for robust, written protections that Arlington will maintain the integrity of the surrounding woods and meadows in Hill's Hill. These include the introduction of a walker-only path (closed to bikers) and closing rogue trails to ensure environmental preservation.

I urge the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Community Preservation Act Commissioners to endorse the plan outlined by the "Save Hill's Hill" group. Your support for a balanced project that aligns with both community recreation and environmental stewardship will set a precedent for future initiatives in Arlington.

Thank you for your collaboration and your efforts towards the preservation of Hill's Hill.

Sincerely,

Sam Polk

Arlington Resident

in support of Save Hill's Hill balanced approach

Sarah Trilling <sarah.trilling@gmail.com>

Tue 4/2/2024 11:45 PM

To: Joe Connelly <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

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Hello,

My name is Sarah Trilling. I live at 122 Newport St, Arlington.

I am writing in support of a balanced approach at Hill's Hill. Save Hill's Hill supports a balanced compromise for this project. This framework would allow construction of a pump track in the "low-value" tree area along Summer Street, with two access trails, as shown in the meeting presentation, in return for preservation in the rest of the property.

Sarah

Hill's Hill Preservation

lah-rah veevy <veewoolfie@yahoo.com>

Wed 4/3/2024 12:23 PM

To: Joe Connelly <jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Mr. Connolly / Parks and Rec Commission:

I am writing to urge you to ensure preservation of the current Hill's Hill woods and meadow in the remainder of the lot.

Please endorse a compromise that has solid, written protections for preservation of: a walker-only path through the center/meadow; the prevention of rogue trails; and adequately addressing any neighbor concerns about noise and parking.

Thank you, an Arlington homeowner and resident

Funding Conditions for Mtn Bike Park at Hill's Hill

Diane Krause <samburu@comcast.net>

Fri 5/10/2024 11:48 AM

To:Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Please distribute to CPA Committee members before meeting:

I ask the CPA Committee to impose the following conditions before funding the PRC mountain bike project at Hill's Hill:

1) Fence the pump track area and fence the southern, downhill side of the meadow.

During recent PRC public meetings and in letters several people raised the issue of rogue trails at Hill's Hill. New trails with jumps continue to be created, as some bikers now seem to think they can do whatever they want at Hill's Hill. Mr. Connelly's response was that jumps will be removed, but that there's no way to stop people from building rogue trails. So how will the habitat be protected? I propose fencing, otherwise the pump track area and the downhill area will continue to be overrun and expanded by bikers, especially if they feel nothing will be done to stop them.

A large number of Arlington residents have expressed concerns over many months for the habitat at Hill's Hill, as the CPA Committee well knows. We have been open to compromise, we appreciate the tree survey you requested, which shows a significant number of native trees at Hill's Hill, especially in the interior section of the park. The PRC response to our concerns about habitat destruction, noise, erosion, parking, congestion, etc. is something they will only address after the fact, and it's unclear how. The CPAC requirement for 2 designs was met by including a design in the meadow "that nobody wants" (Joe Connelly), ignoring, essentially, the wishes of many residents that they look outside the woods for a solution to protect as much of the woods as possible while still allowing mountain biking on trails. Because their pump track design is now larger than originally envisioned, there is no open area where everything will fit. —So with a lot more riders in the woods it is now more critical to have a plan to protect habitat. Their contractor suggested closing the pump track if more rogue trails and/or damage occurred—PRC did not respond to this comment, other than to say later on that you can't stop people from building trails. PRC also did not respond at one meeting when a resident stressed fencing was critical. Please ask for commitments on concrete steps they will take. I see physical barriers as the only solution to permanent damage.

2) Establish walkers-only hours on the trails or some of the trails. Consider early morning or school hours during the week when kids would not be riding the trails.

This is a safety issue for walkers and bikers, but especially walkers with small children or dogs. PRC maintains all trails are multi-use in Arlington parks, but in no other location will there be so many kids on bikes in such a small area, often riding downhill, which means at an increased speed, and sometimes they will not have a view of the trail ahead until they're right on top of someone.

3) Ask for a commitment from PRC not to build additional bike trails at Hill's Hill.

At the last public meeting a number of adult mountain bikers wanted more trails built and a friend of the PRC who heads a mtn. bike organization offered to help design trails. There was no clear commitment from PRC as to whether more trails will be built or existing trails modified. The area is less than 5 acres and already has a network of trails. Please ask for a commitment from the PRC for no new trails or changes to existing trails, unless it is to stop erosion which is already happening in some areas. (There was no discussion on erosion control other than to say volunteers will be doing maintenance.)

4) Ask the PRC to update the public of the status of potentially Mass-listed endangered red mulberry trees at Hill's Hill. (Some of these trees are near the new proposed access trail to the pump track.)

Thank you,

Diane Krause
High Haith Rd.

letter to CPAC re: Hills Hill

Christopher Heigham <cheigham@comcast.net>

Mon 5/13/2024 10:30 AM

To:Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Christine - please distribute to CPAC members.

I am writing about the Hill's Hill project on which you sent conditions last year.

While the PRC and conservationists seem to have settled on a location for the pump track in the woods, I am concerned that there was no serious consideration of a pump track outside the woods. And based on comments from the mountain biking proponents (who are not on the PRC), I am concerned that there will not a shared, balanced solution over time. In particular, please set and enforce conditions around hours, the preservation of existing habitat, and the reversal of illegally built trails.

Thank you for the time and effort you devote to our town.

Topher Heigham, TMM P15

Hill's Hill bike park abutter concerns

Naomi Bailis <naomibailis@gmail.com>

Fri 5/10/2024 4:58 PM

To:Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello Christine.

I am Naomi Bailis, a direct abutter at Summer Hill Circle to the proposed Hill's Hill bike park. For full disclosure I am part of Save Hill's Hill. Save Hill's Hill has never been categorically opposed to the construction of the bike park. I am quite happy that the proposed park will preserve a large portion of the woods. Nonetheless, our concerns as a group have been not only the preservation of habitat, but also inclusive design that includes safe and enjoyable recreation for walkers and nature lovers as well as cyclists, and the end to the construction of rogue bike trails, which make walking (and biking!) in the woods less safe and risks an overwhelm of cyclists in the woods. For those of us who live closest to the woods, especially on Summer Hill Circle, there is also a large concern about noise and parking. Many of us attended the PRC meeting in which the bike park design was approved and frankly, several of our concerns were sidelined, minimized and rebuffed. At one point, Jen Rothenfeld accused us of recording the meeting, which was disarming, adversarial, as well as false. Save Hill's Hill has been a both/and entity from its inception. It is unfortunate that PRC and NEMBA have faced us down as if we were not willing to find middle ground. We have and we do want a middle ground solution.

It is my position that any design proposal for Hill's Hill woods includes the entirety of the woods, not just the construction of the bike park. The entirety of the woods will be changed by this new construction and so the entirety of the woods should be a factor in any new design that takes place in the woods.

I request the installation of fencing around the pump track and a fence around the southern side of the meadow to prevent additional rogue trail construction and to preserve habitat. This will also protect walkers from possible collisions with cyclists and also render the current rogue trails less accessible. I also request that the current rogue trails be removed and that the areas where the rogue trails were created be restored. I request clear signage that states there will be no non resident parking on Washington Street, Brattle Terrace and Summer Hill Circle and clear signage with park hours. I ask that these conditions be made part of the Hill's Hill bike park design that will receive CPA's support and funding. These are the requests of a large number of taxpayers whose tax dollars will fund this project. We want a Hill's Hill woods that is enjoyed by all.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Naomi Bailis
10 Summer Hill Circle

Hill's Hill two-design review

Elaine Crowder <ecrowder@communication-exchange.com>

Mon 5/20/2024 7:12 PM

To: Clarissa Rowe <clarissa.rowe@comcast.net>; Christine Bongiorno <CBongiorno@town.arlington.ma.us>
Cc: Doctrow Susan <srdoctrow@gmail.com>; JO ANNE PRESTON <ja-preston@comcast.net>; David F. Swanson <dswanson922@gmail.com>; Leslie Mayer <blmayer@msn.com>; Kin Lau <klau@town.arlington.ma.us>; Brian McBride <BrianMcB@outlook.com>; JoAnn Robinson <robinsj@rcn.com>; Alexander Franzosa <abobzosa@gmail.com>; Lauren Costa <lcosta@town.arlington.ma.us>; Deanna Stacchi <stacchi13@hotmail.com>

 1 attachments (10 MB)

Hill's Hill Invasives assessment.pdf;

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Dear Clarissa Rowe, Chair and CPA Committee members

I'm writing to express my appreciation for several aspects of the single mountain bike park design I had the opportunity to review in public meeting. I would also like to share several continuing concerns about the design. I present them here with the intent of enhancing adherence to the spirit as well as the specifics of CPAC's conditions, and to acknowledge ongoing community concerns.

Foremost I'd like to see a strong commitment that the woodlands and meadow outside the built biking park be protected from unauthorized trail building, in order that the *natural wooded environment at Hill's Hill be preserved* as a driver of woodlands renewal into the future.

I wish to thank Park & Recreation and project designers for thoughtfully incorporating public feedback and for minimizing impact on the woods and meadow in as much as the selected location allows.

I appreciate:

- The compact design
- The plan to locate in what is somewhat lesser quality woods based on one measure of quality – a tree survey
- That this design leaves much of the natural woodland untouched except for lightly restoring trails.
- The pledged removal of rider-built jumps.

I would still like to see:

- Resolution of the **endangered vs. hybrid status of trees** identified as **endangered red mulberry** by Davey Tree. As identified, my understanding is that the trees must be reported to the state, and no projects can be built until it is definitively determined to be free of endangered species. So resolving this will benefit the project timeline.
- A plan to **prevent unauthorized trail building** and effectively protect the park (as per Title IV, Article 1, Section 2 *Protection of Parks*). A proactive plan will boost user compliance with our Arlington Park bylaws.
- **A second design.** CPAC requested a good faith second design as a condition.
 - A second design that I've not seen reportedly locates the park elements in the meadow. This meadow design was characterized as one that 'no one wants' at the PRC approval meeting
 - Considering that CPAC requested and Town Meeting approved a good faith **second design**, and a large segment of the public understands that the second design would locate the heavily-ridden elements (e.g., pump track) outside the woodlands/meadow, failure to provide appears dismissive of compromise conditions.
- **Use of the highly degraded rectangle** between the fields and Summer St. in the second design CPAC considers (with features moved from hillside to this rectangle). Both the tree survey and Hill's Hill Invasive Plant Assessment found this section of the woods to be most highly degraded (see attached *Land Stewardship, Inc.* report).

- **A safety plan** for bikers and walkers
- **A fleshed out maintenance plan** with commitment of resources (as accompanied the proposal for park opposite the DPW)

And a couple of rider-built elements to dismantle alongside the rider-built jump removal that made it into this version of the design ...

- **Removal of two more user-built elements** in addition to jumps from hillside trails
 - **Banked speed berms** - These berms are used to build up speed in the down hill section leading toward Summer Hill Circle. Their presence triggers increased noise disturbance and unsafe trail speeds for walkers on "mixed use" trails.
 - The depicted **second access trail** from the Minuteman Bikeway.

Finally, I would have liked to have had the opportunity for **public input on multiple designs** as is usual for park projects

Please consider inquiring about these critical loose ends, and requesting their inclusion in the design, design process, and Hill's Hill preservation plans you review after continuing the funds approval hearing to provide time for PRC response.

I recognize that some latter requests in my list go beyond the usual CPAC process. But to its credit CPAC has already adjusted its process in response to considerable public concerns by drafting funding conditions. The public felt heard. But the ensuing process has been flawed. Prior to approving the release of funds, please consider how the public will receive a second design placed in the precise location it was asking be preserved – the Hill's Hill meadow. Please consider that the public never saw the second design before you, rendering this project deserving of more CPAC oversight than other projects you've funded.

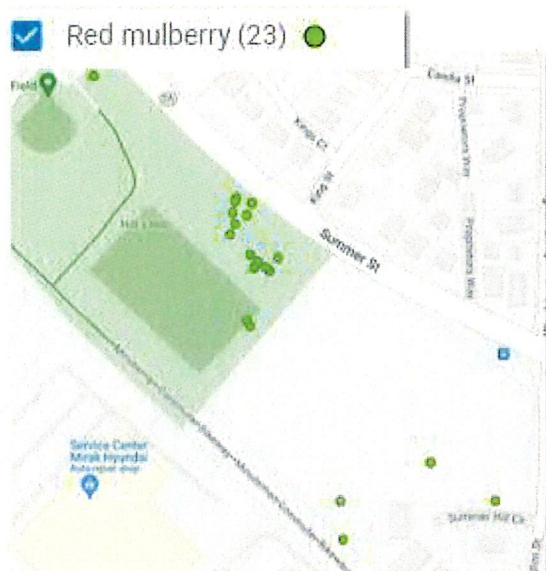
The project is not simply proposing the rebuild of a playground in already developed sections of a park. It is re-purposing naturalized woodlands in an Arlington already bursting with development and a paucity of biodiversity-supporting open space. Consider, as you disburse Arlington tax dollars, your charge to preserve what we have (e.g., on Hill's Hill) if no land can be bought to conserve open space. Please help prevent project creep that negates your compromise conditions.

Sincerely,
Elaine Crowder, TMM Pct. 19, Arlington MA Invasives ArMI

=====page 2 =====

Trees ID'd as Endangered Red Mulberry by Davey Tree

The trees *identified* as **Red mulberry** cluster in an area leading up to and opposite King St.



This same area has been selected as a proposed access trail leading from the existing spur of a paved walkway (along the north side of the soccer field) to the pump track complex. This presents a use conflict that needs resolving.

PROPOSED DESIGN:

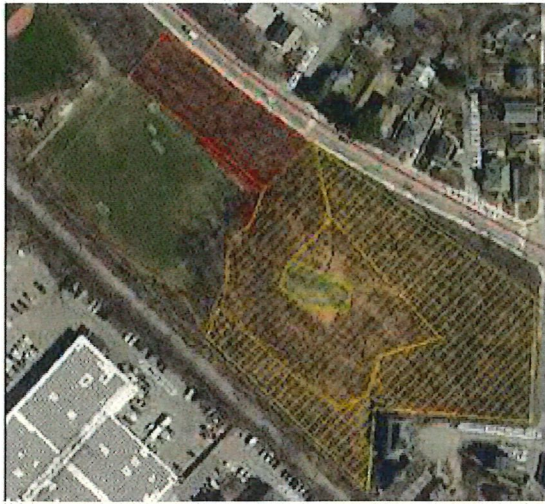


Preliminary design presented at public meeting →:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/69431/638476461419030000>

Hill's Hill Invasive Plant Assessment, *Land Stewardship, Inc.*

The most heavily invaded area of the Hill's Hill parcel is between the ball fields and Summer St., and along field edges (in red).



Notably the meadow has only 1-5% invasive species (green), confirming it as high quality vegetation. Glossy buckthorn is the main invasive mentioned in the more invaded orange area that also contains the majority of high quality oak trees (tree survey). All other invasives noted are described as being scattered (burning bush), or as present in low densities on the Hill itself (bush honeysuckle, privet, Asiatic bittersweet, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed). (see attached report)

Arlington Town ByLaws: Title IV, Article 1

Section 2. Protection of Parks

No person shall injure, deface, **dig up or displace, cut, break, remove, fill in, raise, destroy, or tamper with** any road, **walk, lawn** or beach; or deface, defile, injure, **destroy or ill use any** building, bridge, structure, **fence**, sign, bench, seat, platform, **plant, flower, bush, tree, shrub, turf, rock** or other property or equipment, real or personal, belonging to the Town of Arlington under the jurisdiction of the Park Department, or have possession of any part thereof.

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Elaine Crowder, Ph. D.
Communication Exchange
781-648-1927

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Elaine Crowder, Ph. D.
Communication Exchange
781-648-1927



LAND STEWARDSHIP, INC.

9/20/2023

Hill's Hill

Site Location – Summer Street, Arlington, MA

Tax Parcel ID 80-5-2.A

Acreage – 5.4

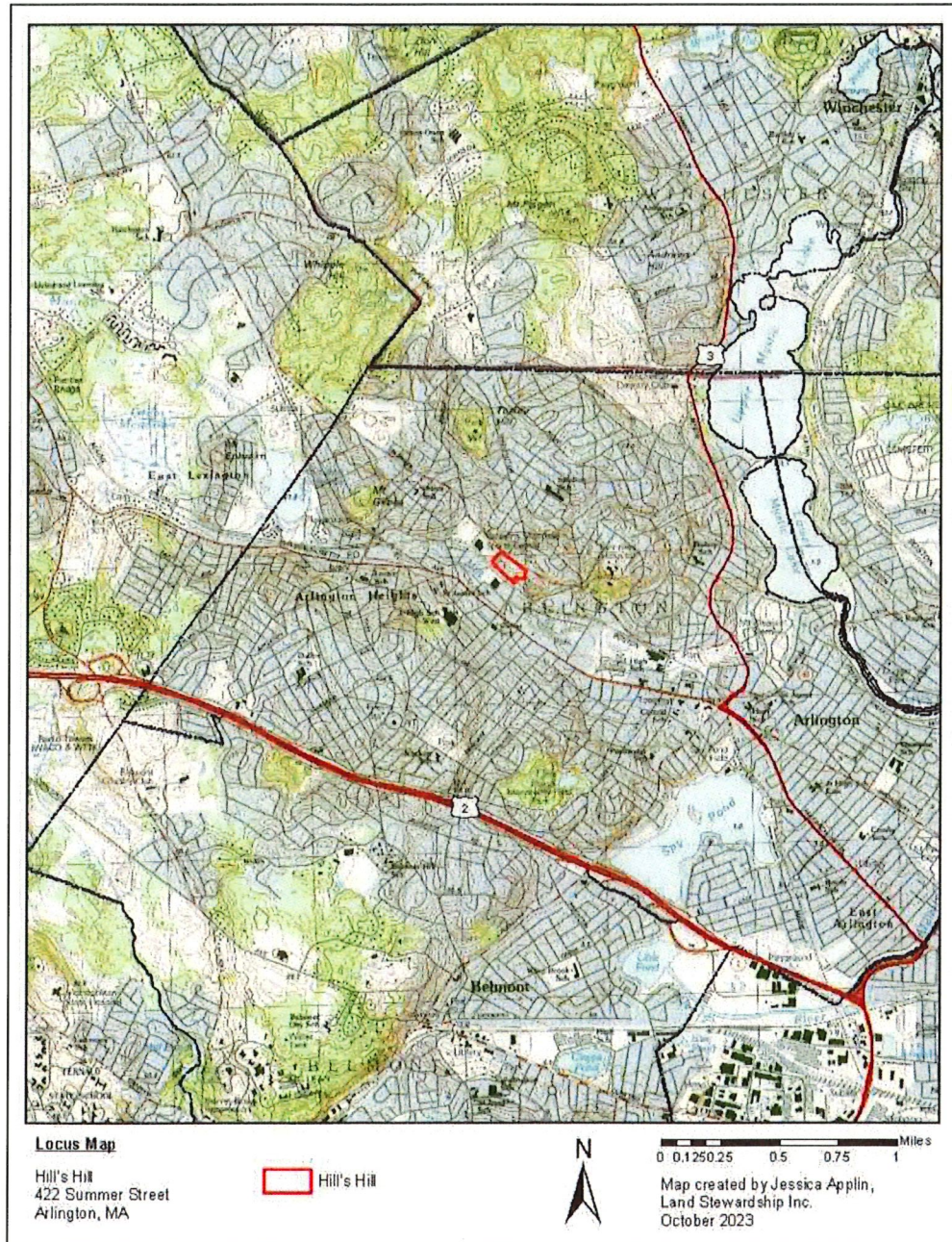


Figure 1. Site location, Hill's Hill, Arlington, MA

Site Description

Hill's Hill is located at 422 Summer Street, directly east of the Veteran's Memorial Sports Complex in the northwest section of Arlington (Figure 1). It has a hilly topography and a trail network that branches through a mixed transitional woodland on the east side of the parcel with a large flat recreational field on the west side. The property can be accessed from the Veteran's Memorial Sports Complex to the west, and from trailheads on Summer St to the north and along the Minute Man Bikeway to the south.

Invasive Plant Assessment

Invasive plants were observed at varying densities throughout the entirety of the property. Glossy buckthorn was the most predominant species noted and was found at moderate and high densities wrapping around the peak and slopes of Hill's Hill. Winged euonymus and common buckthorn were also observed consistently and at moderate densities, with significant patches of garlic mustard within the wooded area north of the field, and Japanese knotweed along much of the field edges. The table below lists all invasive plants identified, as well as location notes for each species. A map of invasive plant densities and distribution follows (Figure 2). Additional data capturing individual invasive species densities, size classes and distributions has been provided along with this report to help further prioritize and guide management. This list is based on observations in the field and is not necessarily all inclusive. Certain herbaceous species, especially at lower densities, may not have been observed due to the time of year the survey was conducted.

Table 1. Invasive species observed at the Hill's Hill property.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location Notes
<i>Shrubs</i>		
Glossy buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Low densities scattered throughout. Higher density patches observed wrapping around the slopes of Hill's Hill
Winged euonymus	<i>Euonymus alatus</i>	Scattered plants throughout entire property at low densities, moderate patches north and east sides of Hill's Hill
Common buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	High density along field edges, moderate density in wooded area north of field
Bush honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera spp.</i>	Low densities scattered throughout.
Privet	<i>Ligustrum spp.</i>	Low densities along field edges
<i>Vines</i>		
Asiatic bittersweet	<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Low densities scattered throughout. Higher density patches along Summer Streets
<i>Herbaceous</i>		
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Wooded area north of field
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Field edges

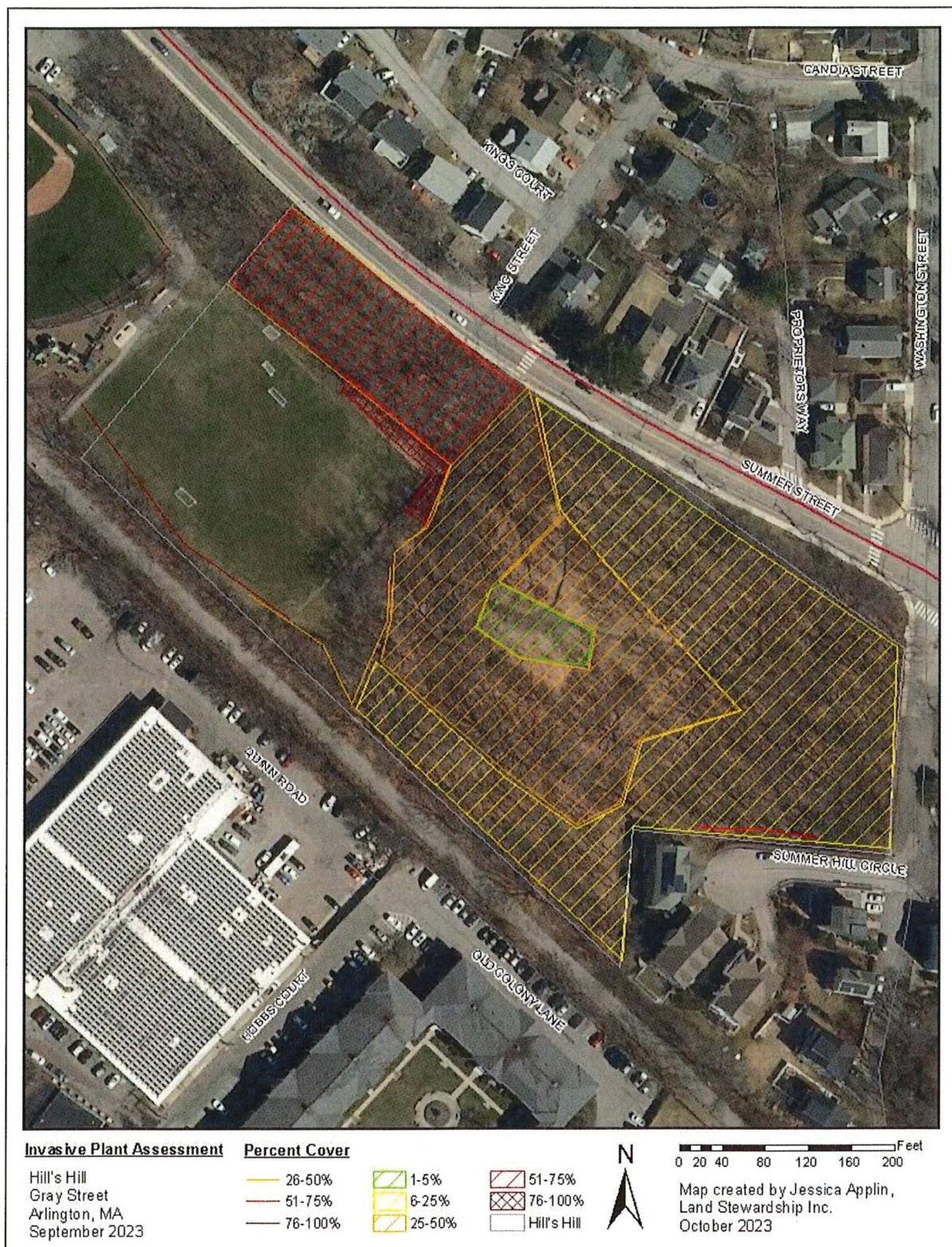
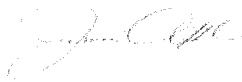


Figure 2. Map of overall invasive plant densities at Hill's Hill.

Priority Management & Restoration Potential

The project area consists of a transitional, mixed forest habitat that is an anthropogenically (human-impacted) disturbed novel ecosystems rather than pristine natural community. However, this is a larger parcel within a highly developed area. There is an opportunity to restore this woodland to benefit overall ecosystem health and habitat connectivity in the greater Arlington area, though there is a planned BMX trail project, and the trail network is already carving up much of the wooded portions of the property. Managing the invasive plant populations will still help increase the overall habitat quality for wildlife. We do not believe that the project should be concerned with active revegetation. Passive regeneration should naturally occur. Over time native plants may be encouraged to fill the spaces previously occupied by invasive species. This should be sufficient to improve the aesthetics and ecology of the area. If desired, after the successful management of invasive species, we might suggest planting fruit and mast-producing woody native shrubs along the recreational field edge to improve food availability for birds and other wildlife.

This report has been prepared by:



Jess Applin, M.S., CERP
Director of Ecological Services

Jess Applin has worked with Land Stewardship, Inc. since 2016, a company dedicated to ecological restoration planning, invasive plant management and native plant establishment. Jess is passionate about wildlife conservation, landscape ecology, and helping people re-connect with the natural world. She holds a BS in Biology (Westfield State University), an MS in Conservation Biology (Antioch University New England) and is a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP) through the Society of Ecological Restoration. She has taught Principles of Environmental Science as an adjunct professor at Westfield State University as well as Ecology classes at Conway School of Landscape Design as a guest lecturer. Jess also leads wildlife tracking workshops, runs wildlife camera trainings, is a level II certified CyberTracker and is a member of The Wildlife Society.



MEMORANDUM

TO: David Morgan, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent, Town of Arlington
FR: Martha Lyon and Daphne Politis
RE: Update on the Mount Gilboa Feasibility Study
DT: April 5, 2024

In preparation for the April 18th meeting with the Arlington Conservation Commission, we have prepared the following progress report on the Mount Gilboa Feasibility Study. Our last appearance before the Commission was on December 21st (2023) and in the first three months of 2024, we completed several tasks in order to move the project forward to completion. The following is a summary.

Public Engagement. Opportunities for public input to date include:

- ~ Neighborhood Site Walk (December 2, 2023),
- ~ Neighborhood Forum (December 2, 2023),
- ~ Public Forum (December 4, 2023),
- ~ Email thread Mount Gilboa/Crescent Hill Neighborhood and individual email messages
- ~ Six Word Stories
- ~ Selfies from individual members of the public

A summary of public input to date is available on the project website. In an effort to provide a wider reach, we designed an online survey together with members of the Conservation Commission for distribution to Arlington residents. The results of the survey were recently tabulated and will be placed on the Mount Gilboa page of the town's website. In general, significant consensus exists among respondents about the future of the Mount Gilboa area, especially in regard to the woodland area and the desire to keep it as natural as possible; ideas regarding the future of the house were more wide-ranging.

Stakeholder Engagement. We interviewed several stakeholders between January 1st and March 31st. The names/affiliations of those interviewed, along with a brief snapshot of findings resulting from the interviews appear below:

- ~ **Historic Districts Commission.** At a regularly scheduled meeting of the AHDC, chair Steve Makowka affirmed that the commission would need to rule on future decisions about alterations to or removal of the Lester Hayden house and garage per the town's Local Historic District bylaw. The AHDC could not provide an opinion about the house/garage at the meeting.
- ~ **Historical Commission.** The AHC co-chair JoAnn Robinson reiterated that it was the responsibility of the AHDC to rule on the alteration or demolition of the Hayden house and garage.
- ~ **Town Officials.** Jim Feeney (Town Manager), Christine Bonjiorno (Deputy Town Manager), and Rob Behrent (Facilities Manager), expressed concern about the town's ability to act as a

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All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.



landlord (if the house were to be rented), or to maintain the house over the long term. The cost of upkeep cannot be covered through rental income, and the town does not have the staff to adequately respond to tenants' needs.

- ~ **Real Estate Professional.** We met on site with Nellie Aikenhead, realtor based in Arlington and town resident, to discuss sales potential for the house/garage. In summary she believes the house could be marketed and sold in its current condition (with a few cosmetic upgrades). The town may want to consider subdividing the 1.795-acre parcel into two lots, one with the house and garage and the other preserved as part of the Mount Gilboa conservation area, as a way of saving the historic structures, generating revenue for the town, and preserving open space.

Updated Inventory Forms. The project team updated both the **Form B (Building)** for the Lester Hayden house and garage, and **Form H (Parks and Landscapes)** for the entire 10.2-acre Mount Gilboa Conservation Area per the most recent Massachusetts Historical Commission standards. These will be reviewed by Arlington's Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission and eventually be submitted to MHC for inclusion in the State's cultural resource database.

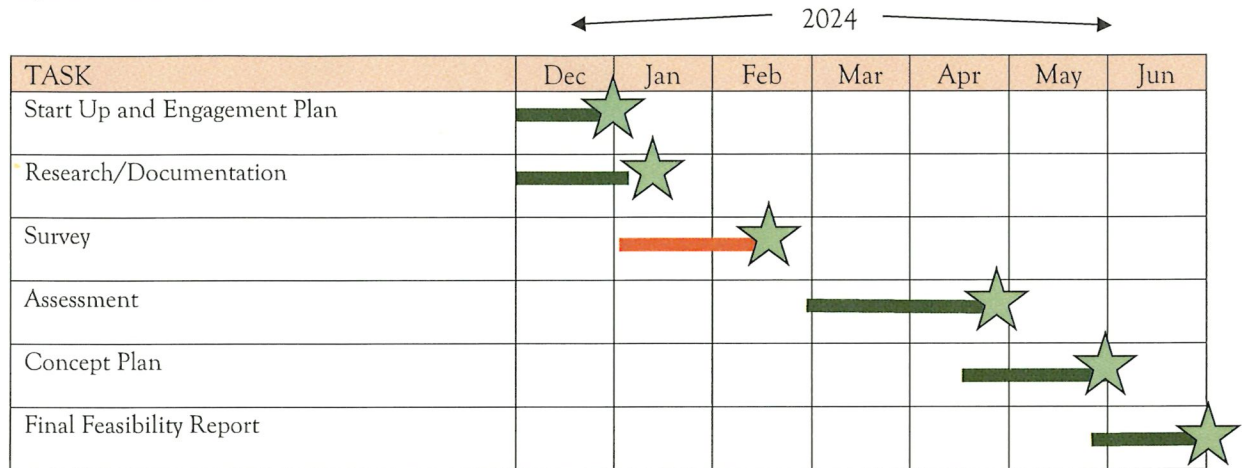
Regulatory Assessment. The team researched laws and regulations pertaining to the house and landscape and assessed the impacts. Significant findings were:

- ~ The entire 10.2 acres is zoned as Open Space, a designation that limits future uses to cultural, entertainment, and recreation-related activities. The exception to this is the 1.795-acre parcel containing the Lester Hayden house and garage, which is exempted (grandfathered) as a pre-existing single-family residence.
- ~ The Arlington Conservation Commission has adopted "regulations" that limit human interaction with the property to **passive recreation**.
- ~ As previously noted, the **Arlington Historic Districts Commission must review any proposed changes/alterations to the house and garage**, including demolition, per the Local Historic District bylaw.
- ~ In its current condition, the house **does not comply with the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. A change in use of the house, if permitted, will require significant, and likely expensive, upgrades to access.
- ~ Arlington's Accessibility Coordinator adheres to the standards/guidelines developed at the Federal level for trail and trailhead development. Currently, the surfaces, widths, and gradients of the Mount Gilboa trail system **do not meet these standards/guidelines**.
- ~ Mount Gilboa's existing **trailheads do not contain information required by the Accessibility Standards for (Federal) Outdoor Developed Areas**, including trail lengths, surfaces, and gradients (slopes).



Next Steps. A structural assessment of the house and garage will be conducted in April. Once this completed, the project team will develop alternative scenarios for use of both the house and land on Mount Gilboa. Project completion by June 30th is anticipated.

Updated Schedule.



= Submittal to/meeting with Committee